

## Program Mission

To protect and restore Washington's waters.

## Environmental Threats

Across Washington, water pollution threatens the state's lakes, estuaries, and streams. In lakes, excess nutrients accelerate the growth of algae and other aquatic plants and kill fish. In estuaries and streams, the most common problems are:

- Bacteria and nutrients carried by stormwater runoff from roads, rooftops, and parking lots that serve our growing urban population.
- Unhealthy levels of bacteria primarily from urban pets and poor agricultural practices.
- Nutrients and bacteria from poorly designed or neglected septic systems.
- Elevated water temperature caused by removing trees from stream banks, industrial effluents, and municipal water treatment facilities.
- Toxic materials such as metals and pesticides from highway runoff, industrial discharges, agricultural practices, and suburban gardening.



## Authorizing Laws

- *Chapter 90.48 RCW, Water Pollution Control Act*
- *Federal Clean Water Act*
- *Federal Safe Drinking Water Act*
- *Chapter 76.09 RCW, Forest Practices Act*

- *Chapter 90.70 RCW, Puget Sound Water Quality Authority*
- *Chapter 70.146 RCW, Water Pollution Control Facilities Financing Act*
- *Chapter 70.105D RCW, Model Toxics Control Act*
- *RCW 43.21A.650, Freshwater Aquatic Weeds Account*
- *Chapter 90.64 RCW, Dairy Waste Management Act*
- *Chapter 90.46 RCW, Reclaimed Water Use (1995)*

## Constituents/Interested Parties

The program's watershed approach to managing water quality encourages the wide participation of all interests within a river basin: governments, businesses, special interest groups, and citizens to solve water quality problems and prevent pollution. It provides a structure to coordinate point source and nonpoint-source water quality activities, the delivery of local services, protection and prevention activities, and better management of the state's waters.

The program has two main advisory committees: The Water Quality Partnership, convened in 1994, serves as a standing policy advisory committee, providing assistance on a variety of program elements, including permitting and enforcement, storm water, dairy waste management, water quality standards, groundwater protection, and nonpoint-source pollution control. The partnership includes environmental organizations, industries, small businesses, local, state, and federal governments, and Native American tribes.

The Financial Assistance Advisory Council, composed of conservation districts, cities, counties, tribes, and state and federal agencies, addresses how water quality grants and loans are administered.

Under written agreements, the agency works with several state agencies and local conservation districts on such diverse issues as aquatic weed

control, shellfish and salmon protection, stormwater runoff, and dairy waste management.

### ***Performance Partnership***

The Department of Ecology and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have embarked on a fundamentally new approach to our relationship: The Performance Partnership Agreement. Within the confines of federal laws and requirements, the agreement identifies mutual priorities, strategic goals, objectives, and activities that the agencies will jointly undertake each biennium.

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## **Major Activities**

### ***Point Source Pollution Prevention and Management***

The agency regulates discharges of pollutants to surface and ground waters by writing wastewater discharge permits for sewage treatment plants, storm water, and industrial discharges. A permit is actually a rigorous set of limits, monitoring requirements, or management practices, usually specific to a discharge, which is designed to assure that a facility can meet both treatment and water quality standards. The program conducts inspections and site visits every two years to about 25 percent of more than 4,000 permit holders.

Just in the last 10 years, the total number of permitted facilities has increased by 73 percent, resulting in less pollution in lakes, rivers, and marine waters. Some municipalities are re-using highly treated waste water, results in water conservation and a reduced discharge to surface water.

### ***Technical Assistance for Small Municipalities:***

The agency provides on-site technical assistance to permit holders, distributes pollution prevention and best management practices publications, conducts workshops, and holds client group sessions.

***Enforcement:*** During follow-up on permit violations, the Water Quality Program works with permit holders to achieve compliance, using various compliance and enforcement avenues,

depending on the history and severity of the violations.

### ***Stormwater Management***

The agency is developing manuals for managing storm water in the distinct environments that exist west and east of the Cascade Mountains. The manuals provide guidance on controlling the quantity and quality of stormwater runoff from development and industrial activities. Following requirements and deadlines of the Clean Water Act, the agency is re-issuing stormwater permits to Washington's largest cities (so-called Phase I jurisdictions) and will develop a Phase II permit program that will require stormwater management programs for areas with populations of 10,000 or more.

### ***Nonpoint-Source Pollution Prevention and Management***

Nonpoint-source pollution (polluted runoff) is now the leading cause of water pollution in Washington. It poses a major health and economic threat to people and harms fish, shellfish, drinking water, recreation, and aesthetics. It also contributes to flooding and loss of usable land. Sources include fecal coliform bacteria from poorly managed dairy farms, failing septic systems, and pet waste; elevated water temperature from lack of natural riparian zones; and pesticides from agriculture and gardening activities.

The program's efforts to solve these problems include raising awareness, encouraging community action, providing funding to solve problems, and supporting local decision makers by reviewing Growth Management Act and State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) documents.

***Forest Practices Technical Assistance:*** The Department of Ecology plays a supportive role with the Department of Natural Resources on water quality issues related to forest management, focusing on watershed analysis, shorelines, water supplies, road management planning, and participation in interdisciplinary team reviews.

*Agricultural Technical Assistance:* The Agricultural Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of Ecology, the Conservation Commission, and conservation districts around the state allows the agency to refer farmers to conservation districts for technical assistance and farm planning, and allows the agency to enforce water quality laws with uncooperative farmers.

*Dairy Waste Management Planning and NPDES Permitting:* Under the Dairy Nutrient Management Act of 1998, the agency conducts a registration and inspection program for all dairies holding a milk producer's license. This law requires all dairies to obtain an approved "nutrient management" plan by July 2002 and to fully implement it by the end of 2003. If problems are found as the result of an inspection or a complaint, the dairy may be required to apply for an NPDES (discharge) permit.

*Education:* Although the agency uses its regulatory power to enforce the laws, it also uses education to raise public awareness of pollution problems and remedies. The agency supports teachers with Magic Apple Grants, sponsors children's Watershed Festivals, and encourages volunteer water monitoring by students and community groups. The program has a strong Internet presence, offering resources, and tools for nonpoint pollution control.

### ***Financial Assistance***

The Water Quality Program provides grants and low interest loans, along with technical assistance, to local governments, state agencies, and tribes to enable them to build, upgrade, repair, or replace facilities to improve and protect the quality of surface and underground waters. The agency also helps with nonpoint-source control projects, such as watershed planning, stormwater management, education, and agricultural best management practices.

Grants are targeted to nonpoint-source problems and communities whose needed wastewater facilities projects would cause ratepayers a financial hardship. Local governments also use loans for both point and nonpoint-source water

pollution prevention and correction projects. The agency is committed to coordinating strategic grant and loan assistance with other state and federal funding agencies.

### ***Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) - Water Cleanup Plans***

The federal Clean Water Act requires the agency to identify water bodies that fail to meet water quality standards and to prepare water cleanup plans or TMDLs, to improve their health. Through a public process, the agency works with local interests to reduce water pollution in water body that is on the 303(d) list of polluted waters. The agency will then propose and establish conditions in discharge permits and nonpoint-source management plans to reduce pollution, and a monitoring plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the cleanup plan.

From selected waters around the state, the agency collects data and evaluates conditions related to pollution and attainment of water quality standards. This includes assessing how well waters are supporting the uses that the public expects. The agency provides the data to local governments and other decision makers.

Results of assessments are published in two reports: Water Quality Assessment (305b Report) and a report listing waters that fail to meet water quality standards (303d list). The Water Quality Assessment is the most comprehensive report on the state of Washington's waters. The 303d list is a strong regulatory tool, which results in developing cleanup plans (TMDLs) to correct pollution problems where they exist.

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## **Major Issues**

### ***Endangered Species Act***

The agency is developing plans to protect and restore healthy fish populations and habitat while maintaining a healthy economy. The agency is participating in a federal initiative on programmatic approaches to meet the requirements of the Endangered Species Act and the Clean Water Act. It is hoped that a national memorandum of understanding among affected

agencies can better define roles and expected outcomes.

revising several water quality indicators (such as temperature) used to protect Washington's water.

### ***Nonpoint-Source Water Pollution***

With the assistance of a broad range of agencies, tribes, local governments, and interest groups, the agency recently drafted a nonpoint-source management plan for the state. The plan includes a critical analysis of Washington's efforts to address nonpoint pollution, identifies actions needed to improve the effectiveness of existing programs, and introduces some new approaches.

One such new approach is the new general permits for aquatic pesticide use that the agency will begin writing in spring 2002. Aquatic pesticides are used for controlling mosquitoes, aquatic weeds and algae, exotic fish, burrowing shrimp in oyster beds, and excessive nutrients in lakes. New permits will now require closer evaluation of the effects of these chemicals on the water quality.

### ***Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Dam Licensing***

Several significant hydropower producing dams have licenses that are expiring. As dams are relicensed, the agency is responsible for certifying that the dams will meet water quality standards under section 401 of the Clean Water Act.

### ***Stormwater***

Stormwater has emerged as a significant contributor to water pollution in Washington. The agency will be working to build a common sense storm water program for the urbanizing cities and counties to address the problems associated with stormwater. We will also be revising permits for the largest municipalities and providing technical assistance to all municipalities on techniques to address stormwater problems.

### ***Water Quality Standards***

Through continuing work with representative advisory panels and technical work groups, the agency is proposing three significant changes to the existing water quality standards. These include modifying the anti-degradation process, assigning protected uses for a water body, and

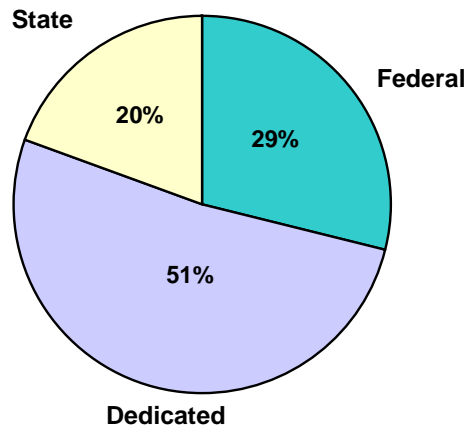
## Water Quality Program Budget

Budget: \$43,331,681; Staffing: 208 FTEs

State	(\$ ) Amount	Sources	Uses
General Fund - State	8,475,428	Multiple	Point-source enforcement of permit requirements. Also, Puget Sound Plan activities for shellfish protection; nonpoint-source watershed management; and stormwater control, and operator certification program, forest practices compliance, water cleanup plans, wastewater re-use, aquatic plant management EIS, compliance with water quality laws related to nonpoint-source pollution.
<b>Federal</b>			
General Fund - Federal	12,528,212	Federal grants	Numerous EPA grants for point and nonpoint-source control; planning and implementation grants to local governments; groundwater protection; and administrative moneys for pass-through funds.
<b>Dedicated Funds</b>			
General Fund-Private/Local	29,274	Agreements with local governments.	Miscellaneous, water cleanup plans.
Water Quality Account	2,517,716	Excise taxes on cigarettes and other tobacco products; sales tax transfer; loan repayments, interest payments; and state general fund transfer	Grant and loan management; technical assistance to local governments for wastewater treatment facilities and nonpoint-source projects.
State Toxics Control	2,018,882	Hazardous substance tax, recovered remedial actions and penalties collected	Cooperative effort with Oregon and EPA to enhance the health of the lower Columbia River through the National Estuary Program. The Aquatic Plant Management Program assesses human health and environmental risk associated with various aquatic pesticides. Also, work with agricultural community to reduce pesticide and other contamination.
Water Quality Permit Account	14,215,369	Fees assessed on the holders of wastewater discharge permits	Issue and manage federal and state wastewater-discharge permits.
Freshwater Aquatic Weeds	1,654,845	Fees on boat trailers	Grants to local governments to prevent, remove, or manage invasive freshwater aquatic weeds.
Metals Mining	5,000	Fees collected from active metals mining and milling operations	Inspections required by Metals Mining Act.
Water Pollution Control Revolving Fund	1,886,955	EPA grant and state match	Administer a loan program for constructing or replacing water pollution control facilities. Activities include portfolio management and technical assistance to local governments for point, nonpoint, and estuary projects.
<b>Capital Budget Funding: \$319,139,304</b>			
Referendum 26	398,083 <i>reappropriation</i>	Sale of Bonds, loan repayments, and interest payments	Grants/loans for the construction or improvement of public waste disposal facilities.

Referendum 39	500,000 <i>reappropriation</i>	Sale of Bonds; loan repayment and interest payments	Grants/loans for the construction or improvement of public waste disposal facilities.
Water Quality Account	77,318,809 (\$27,318,809 <i>reappropriation</i> and \$50,000,000 <i>new</i> )	Excise tax on cigarettes and tobacco products; sales tax transfer; loan repayments and interest payments	Grants/loans for water pollution control facilities, nonpoint-source control, and water quality improvement planning and implementation activities.
Public Works Assistance Account	5,528,903 <i>reappropriation</i>	Real estate excise taxes, loan repayments and interest payments	Grants for water pollution control facilities, nonpoint-source control, and water quality improvement planning and implementation activities for communities with populations less than 5,000.
State Revolving Loan Fund	235,393,509 (\$76,280,707 <i>reappropriation</i> and 159,112,802 <i>new</i> )	Federal, capitalization grants, loan repayments, interest repayments, and state match	Loans for constructing or replacing water pollution control facilities, nonpoint-source control activities, and estuary management.

**Water Quality Program Dollars by Fund Source**



**Water Quality Program Dollars by Activity**

